

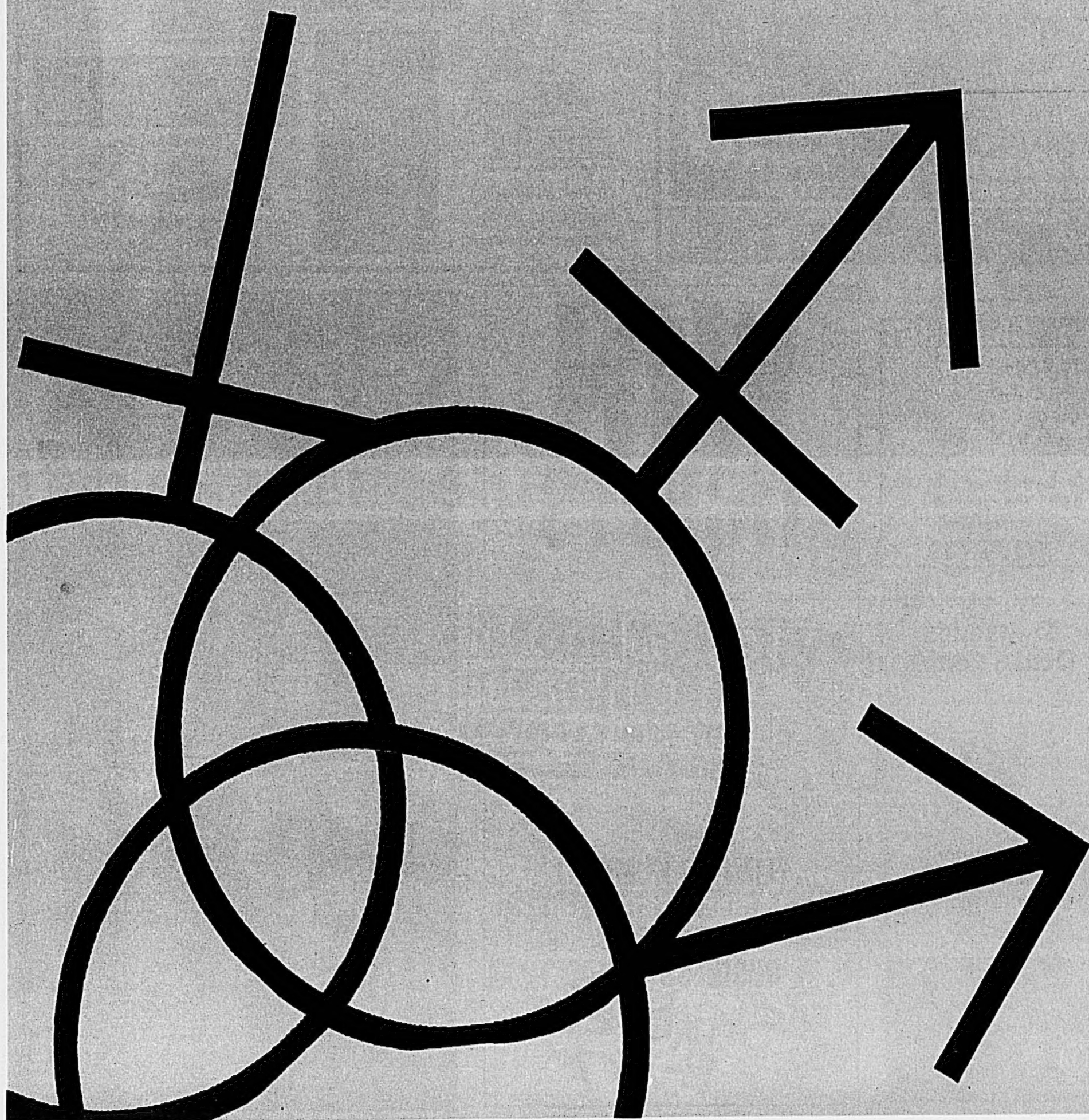


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NOVEMBER 13 NOVEMBRE, 1995

Volume 85 Number 27

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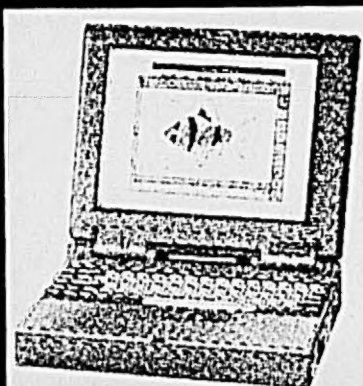
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PEEL

**EVENTS**

Monday, November 13

• **Black Students' Network Movie Night**, featuring *I Like It Like That*, the first Hollywood film ever directed by a black woman, and *Looking For Langston*, a film about black gay American author and political figure Langston Hughes. 19h, Lea 26. \$2 donations towards Black History Month at the door. All welcome.

• **Islam Awareness Week** will have a display in Shatner 107/108 all week from 10h-16h. Also tonight there will be a lec-

ture, "Islamic Monotheism" in Shatner B09/B10 from 18h to 20h.

Tuesday, November 14

• **Post-Abortion Support Group** meets today at 17h15 in Shatner 423. For info call Erin at 398-6823 or 288-3703.

• **Islam Awareness Week** will hold a workshop on *Shahaada* in Shatner 107 from 14h30 to 16h.

• **The Latin American Awareness Group** meets today in Shatner 107/108 at 18h to discuss the *Project Accompagnement* information night and fundraising. All Welcome.

• **Cuban Youth Tour**, the tour leaders are participating in a cross-country tour of Canadian universities and colleges and will speak at McGill regarding "Reality Facing Cuban Youth Today". For more info call 284-0436.

Wednesday, November 15

• **LBGTM's Bisexual Discussion Group** meets tonight in Shatner 432 at 17h30. Men and Women welcome for a friendly, open discussion.

• **Islam Awareness Week** will hold a Workshop on *Knowledge* in Shatner 107 from 14h30 to 16h and a Lecture "Our Duty towards The Creator and Creation"

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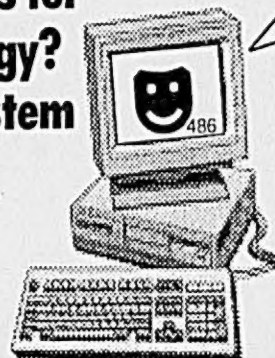
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THE SAME UNIQUENESS

Queer, Dyke, Fag, Bi. Labels. These days, we tend to rely on them more and more, to lump people together, to categorise and define them. Granted, labels help to unify oppressed groups of people. They can provide the means to form a power base and to speak out from it. But at the same time, by dividing people into "special interest" groups, it is much easier to ignore the issues that these groups bring up than to actually address them.

Bisexual and Transgendered (TG) issues have been treated in this way. They have been marginalized in mainstream society and in the gay and lesbian community. It has been and still is a case of "Bisexual issues only for bisexuals" and "Transgendered issues only relate to transgendered people". But these issues speak to more people than that.

Transgendered issues aren't just about hormones, drag, and SRS (see glossary). These is-

ssues challenge society's preconceived notions of gender roles, gender traits and gender, period. They point to how we all embody a mix of "masculine" and "feminine" traits and more important, to how arbitrary these distinctions actually are. Beyond physical differences, the differences in mental, emotional and sexual differences are slowly disappearing, as are society's artificial gender roles that place women as gatherers and men as hunters. The roles that society assigns to people are those created by a male-dominated, sex-phobic society where not everyone has been given the chance to define themselves. All these values and roles that society holds as truth need to be reconsidered in light of transsexuality.

Bisexual politics also emphasise that you can't categorise people. Bisexuality challenges the dichotomy that you are either heterosexual or homosexual. But even more than that, it chal-

lenges the notion of "either/or." Bisexual people represent the full spectrum of human existence: from practically hetero to almost homo, from kinky to vanilla, from monogamous to polyamorous. Every single permutation exists within the scope of bisexuality and that is the beauty of it. To try to reduce everyone to these categories is to try to cover up and hide the natural and evolved variety of human existence. Bisexual people reflect the diversity within any given group and shows that these little black boxes to which people have been assigned to just don't work.

The bisexual and transgendered movements both suggest that people cannot be classified into rigid "either/or" categories and roles. Instead it suggests that continuums of sexuality, of gender, of race, of age exist. Each person exists somewhere along these continuums, not defined by limits, but by a range of possibilities. Each person is at some point of human experience and it is this diversity that creates the lattice of life.

The danger in constant labelling and categorising is that it will reduce the rich tapestry of life to a single thread. Instead of trying to define each and every single second of human existence, why not revel in the differences that makes each person unique and remember what makes us all human: the capacity to love, empathise and destroy. What a boring world this would be if we were all the same.

In the end, I hope that this issue will help celebrate the different ways of existing in this world. And though there are differences, remember that we are more alike than we are unlike. We are all human.

Derek Fung

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The Daily is a founding member of Canadian University Press, Presse étudiante du Québec, and Publi-Peq.

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SEXUAL IDENTITY AND GENDER IDENTITY GLOSSARY

The following is a glossary of some basic terms used in describing gender and sexual identity. These meanings, however, are continually changing and are used differently by different individuals in different contexts. The definitions assume the existence of only two sexes and genders which many people consider closely related or overlapping. In this way, they may present a limited view of a much richer reality.

Despite these caveats, many people find the terms listed here useful in varying degrees, even if only as a starting point for describing how their view of the world differs from that represented here.

Bear in mind that gender identity refers to whether one thinks of oneself as a man (masculine) or as a woman (feminine), gender/sex is whether one has a vagina or a penis and gender roles are society's arbitrarily prescribed rules for how people are supposed to behave based on their sex.

Sexual identity refers to whom one is sexually and romantically attracted. When one's sex and gender identity are different, sexual identity can be based on either one. Alternatively, one may have two sexual identities, one as a man and one as a woman.

Androgeny: The quality of simultaneously exhibiting 'masculine' and 'feminine' characteristics.

Benjamin Standards, The: The international guidelines developed by Dr. Harry Benjamin regarding requirements of applicants for hormone therapy and sexual reassignment surgery.

Bigendered: One who switches between masculine and feminine gender roles periodically.

Biphobia: The oppression or mistreatment of *bisexuals*, especially by *lesbians* and gay men.

Bisexual: One who has significant sexual and romantic attractions to members of both the same and the other sex, or who identify as members of the *bisexual* community.

Butch: 1. 'Masculine' or macho dress and behaviour, regardless of sex or gender identity. 2. A sub-identity of *lesbian* or *gay*, based on 'masculine' or macho dress and behaviour.

Come out: 1. To disclose one's own sexual identity to

another. 2. To discover that one's own sexual identity is different than previously assumed. 3. To deal with one's own and others' reactions to the discovery or revelation of one's sexual identity.

Drag: 1. Clothes, often unusual or dramatic, especially those considered appropriate to the other sex. 2. Can be applied to any recognisable 'look' (e.g. "I see you are in corporate drag today").

Dyke: Reclaimed derogatory slang. Refers to *lesbians*, or to *lesbians* and *bisexual* women.

F2M: Female to male. Used to specify the direction of a sex or gender role change.

Femme: 1. 'Feminine' or effeminate dress and behaviour, regardless of sex or gender identity. 2. A sub-identity of *lesbian* or *gay*, based on 'masculine' or macho dress and behaviour.

Gay: One who has significant sexual and romantic attractions primarily to members of the same sex, or who identifies as a member of the gay community. Can refer to gay males or both gay males and *lesbians*. Although some use the term *gay community* to refer to all sexual minorities, *lesbians* and *bisexuals* often do not feel included by it.

Gender (identity): A psychological gender role (i.e. 'masculine' or 'feminine').

Gender (identity) community: People who identify as *transvestite*, *transsexual*, or *transgendered*. Members of the *gender community* do not necessarily identify as members of the *sexual minority community*.

Gender dysphoria (GD): Unhappiness or discomfort experienced by one whose sexual organs do not match one's gender identity.

Gender neutral: Clothing, behaviours, thoughts, feelings, relationships, etc. which are considered appropriate for members of both sexes.

Gender role: Arbitrary rules assigned by society, that define what clothing, behaviours, thoughts, feelings, relationships, etc. are considered appropriate and inappropriate for members of each sex. What is considered 'masculine,' 'feminine,' or 'neutral' varies according to location, class, occasion, and numerous other factors.

Genetic male/man (GM): One who was considered male

from birth, regardless of one's present sex or gender identity.

Genetic female/woman (GF/GM): One who was considered female from birth, regardless of one's present sex or gender identity.

Hermaphrodite: One who has both a penis and a vagina. Considered derogatory.

Heterosexual (het): One who has significant sexual and romantic attractions primarily to members of the other sex.

Heterosexism: The assumption that identifying as *heterosexual* and having sexual and romantic attractions only to members of the other sex is good and acceptable, and that other sexual identities and attractions are bad and unacceptable. The assumption that anyone whose sexual orientation is not known must be *straight*.

Homophobia: Originally, a fear of sexual attraction to the same sex. Developed into a term describing all aspects of the oppression of *lesbians*, *gays*, and *bisexuals* (sometimes does not include *bisexuals*).

Homosexual: Formal or clinical term for *gay*, usually meaning gay male, but can refer to *lesbian* or *bisexual*. *Homosexual* and *homosexuality* are terms often associated with the proposition that same gender attractions are a mental disorder (homophilia). The terms are distasteful to some people.

Hormone therapy: Used to change secondary sex characteristics, including breast size, weight distribution, and facial hair growth.

Identify/ied (as): To think of oneself as having a particular sexual identity or gender identity (e.g. "I identify as a *bisexual*" or "He is *bisexual-identified*"). To emphasise that an identity term refers to one's internal reality, as opposed to what others perceive.

Identity: How one thinks of oneself. One's internal self, as opposed to what others perceive.

Kinsey scale, The: An equal-interval scale with continuous graduations between *heterosexuality* (0) and *homosexuality* (6) used as a measure of sexuality.

Label: How someone else sees or thinks of one.

Lesbian: A woman who has significant sexual and

romantic attractions to members of the same sex, or who identifies as a member of the *lesbian* community. *Bisexual* women often do not feel included by this term.

M2F: Male to female. Used to specify the direction of a sex or gender role change.

Monosexual: One who has significant sexual and romantic attractions primarily to members of one sex (i.e. *straight*, *gay*, *lesbian*). Someone who is not *bisexual*.

Neuter: 1. One who has neither a penis nor a vagina. 2. Occasionally used to mean *androgynous*.

Other sex/gender: The other sex or gender than the reference person's own (e.g. "She has an other sex partner").

(To be) Out: To be open about one's sexual identity with someone or in a situation.

(To) Out (someone): 1. To disclose a second person's sexual identity to a third person, particularly without the second person's permission. 2. To disclose one's own sexual identity, sometimes inadvertently.

Pre-operative transsexual (Pre-op TS): One who is actively planning to switch physical sexes, mostly to relieve *gender dysphoria*. Probably, but not necessarily, cross dresses, takes hormone therapy, and gets electrolysis.

Primary sex organs: Penis (male) or vagina (female).

Queer: Reclaimed derogatory slang for the *sexual minority community* (e.g. *Queer Nation*). Not accepted by all the *sexual minority community*, especially older members.

Same sex/gender: The same sex or gender as the reference person's own (e.g. "She has a same sex partner").

Sex: male or female, depending on one's primary sex organs.

Sex role: See *gender role*.

Sexual identity: How one thinks of oneself, in terms of being significantly attracted to members of the same or the other sex. Based on one's internal experience, as opposed to which gender one's sexual partners belong to.

Sexual identity/minority community: A formal term which includes *lesbians*, *bisexuals*, *gays*, and sometimes members of the *gender community*. Members of the *sexual minority community* usually do not identify as members

of the *gender community*.

Sexual orientation/preference: How one thinks of her/himself, in terms of being significantly attracted to members the same or the other sex. *Sexual orientation* implies the inability to control or influence the development of one's sexual and romantic attractions. Conversely, *sexual preference* implies the ability to control or influence the development of one's sexual and romantic attractions.

Sexual reassignment surgery (SRS): A surgical procedure which changes one's primary sexual organs from one sex to another (i.e. penis to vagina or vagina to penis).

Stonewall: A pivotal event in 1969, which basically involved *queers* revolting against discrimination, that many attribute to having spurred the modern *queer* movement.

Straight: Colloquial for *heterosexual*. Because *straight* has connotations of "unadulterated," "pure," and "honest," some members of the *sexual identity community* object to the implication that one who is not *straight* is "bent," "adulterated," "impure," or "dishonest." *Straight* has connotations of 'narrow,' 'straight-laced' or 'conservative,' and some *heterosexual-identified* people find it distasteful.

Transgender community: Formal term for *gender community*.

Transgendered (TG): One who switches gender roles, whether just once, or many times at will. Inclusive term for *transsexuals* and *transvestites*.

Transsexual (TS): One who switches physical sexes (usually just once, but there are exceptions). *Primary sex* change is accomplished by *sexual reassignment surgery*, *Hormone therapy*, electrolysis, additional surgery, and other treatments that change secondary sex characteristics.

Transvestite (TV): One who mainly cross-dresses for pleasure in the appearance and sensation. The pleasure may not be directly erotic. May feel comfortable in a focused transgender role while cross dressed. May occasionally experience *gender dysphoria*.

LBGTM expands its community

By Roberta Laucke

It was only four years ago that queer McGill students created a new student-run service to ensure that their needs would be addressed.

In 1991 the group was called Gays and Lesbians at McGill. The group has since expanded its name to Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay and Transgendered Students of McGill (LBGTM) in order to include more members of the queer community rather than just gays and lesbians.

"The role of LBGTM is to offer a safe space in and outside of McGill. It is a place to talk to people," explained Sean Addis, LBGTM's administrator.

"Here you can get to know people with the same concerns and political aspirations. You can receive counseling. We have dances and general discussion groups," he continued.

Many students at McGill have found the group extremely helpful in encouraging them to deal with their sexuality. This safe environment has made them feel comfortable to be themselves.

"I came out my second year at McGill University. It's nice knowing that something is out there... that we have a community and support so we do not feel alone," stated Karen Tamaki, LBGTM's social co-coordinator.

Membership numbers were low when the group first started, and the group

expanded to include bisexuals during the 1992-1993 school year. Last summer a discussion group was held to make the group even more inclusive by adding transgendered people to the name. These changes were made to make all students feel welcome within the group.

"Last year we discussed offering more space for everyone. In our constitution it states [that] we represent all issues and all people. We added transgendered people to make them feel included. The key is solidarity. We want transgendered people to feel accepted," stated Addis.

The group's expansion has been beneficial to many students. "This expansion has made people address gender issues... There's a lot more interest from women and transgendered people," stated Chris Carter, political co-coordinator at LBGTM.

"This has been beneficial for everyone. The main thing we wanted to do is raise awareness and we have," he added.

But even with these changes, some people still feel marginalised by LBGTM. "Most of the people who are active in the leadership of the group are men. Men have paid a lot of lip service in getting women involved... [but] it is the old boys' network," said Cherie Payne, a recent McGill graduate and past LBGTM member.

"I found in terms of membership the women's level of involvement is low... There is definitely room for women to improve [their] status in LBGTM," Payne added.

Tamaki agreed with Payne and stated that changes are necessary. "I think it is a tricky situation. There is separation between the men and the women because the group is male-dominated, so the women feel marginalised because they are the minority. The general discussion group has 20 men and only three or four women. The situation can be improved."

According to Jeanna Steele, a U3 Arts student and past member of LBGTM, it is not only women but other groups who feel isolated as well.

"I felt marginalised because I am bisexual. I could not identify with the issues in the general discussion group. We had a separate group that was better. It identified more with bisexuals. I think it would have been better if we had more group activities," she said.

Carter agreed with Steele, but stressed that the situation is slowly improving. "Lots of groups feel marginalised, [like] blacks, people of colour, bisexuals and women, [but] it is getting better. There have been problems with this situation and we are working on it," he said.

"Women in the past had low representation and we have addressed these issues.

Now gender parity is required by the constitution for everything that LBGTM does. There are more women volunteers for higher positions. We are getting events at Sisters, the lesbian and bisexual bar. There has been the creation of the women's group. The situation is improving," he continued.

LBGTM has also been trying to change policies at McGill. Members of the student-run organisation feel the University is not sensitive to issues affecting the queer community.

As such, LBGTM coordinators and Students' Society VP University Affairs Lisa Grushcow have been working together on a questionnaire addressing problems of sexuality in relation to student life at McGill. The questionnaire will be given out to students and faculty across campus next semester.

"The questionnaire will be modeled after the one Concordia gave out. We will be looking at heterosexuality and homophobia," stated Grushcow. "We want to know if people are experiencing homophobia from peers and student services. We want to know if LGBT students are well served at McGill or if there is discrimination. We are looking for some direction to see what it is that we need to work on."

The questionnaire will provide specific facts to help McGill develop queer-sensitive policies and provide

a safe space for everyone on campus. "Everyone on campus should feel at home," said Grushcow, but as of this moment not everyone does.

"Right now homosexuality is seen as a disease in some quarters. People are called 'faggots' and people have been beaten up. We want homophobia, sexism and other forms of discrimination to be addressed in McGill's harassment policies. These are student issues and we need to raise awareness," she stated.

Carter concurred with Grushcow. "McGill's administration is behind every other university on harassment and discrimination policies. There are no gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered policies. These issues have to be taken into consideration. There are benefits for opposite sex employees. There is nothing for the same sex."

Interested students can go to the following events: Bisexual group Wed. 17h30 pm, Shatner rm 423. Womyn's group Thurs. 18h Shatner 423. Coming Out group Fri. 17h30 United Theological College at 3521 University. General Group Fri. 19h in the basement of the United Theological College. Coordinating committee meeting Wed. 18h30 Shatner 435. There is also an LBGTM library available to all students. For more info: 398-6822.

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Starting from scratch

Groups work toward

sexual orientation policy

By Jacqueline Reis

In 1991, the Québec Human Rights Commission found that there was an atmosphere of homophobia at McGill.

Raynald Lepage, president of Lesbian and Gay Employees of McGill (LAGEM) recounted one instance in which "A supervisor told an employee that had that person known that the employee was gay, he would have never been hired."

He added, "It was a comment that went a long way."

When asked about McGill's response to discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, Sean Addis, administrator of Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay and Transgendered students of McGill (LBGTM), said "I think it's an issue that they try to neglect. It's something that they try to blind sight... [But] we know that it's present."

Addis cited the events surrounding a recent LBGTM dance at Gert's as one example. According to Addis, many of the people who were in the bar before the dance made homophobic comments and gestures.

"Sometimes people don't say much, but it is present," said Addis.

"I've heard a lot of stories and I believe a lot of stories," said Lisa Grushcow, Students' Society vp university affairs. Grushcow listed several forms of heterosexism on campus, including gay bashing, homophobic slurs and a curriculum that teaches homosexuality as a deviation.

"It happens," said Chris Carter, a political coordinator at LBGTM, referring to discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. "A proactive administration on this issue would be great."

But when asked if he expected to see this happen, his response was "In a word, no."

Where's the policy?

The words "sexual orientation" are mentioned only once in the entire forest of paper work that makes up McGill policy.

"Every student has a right to equal treatment by the University; this right must not be impaired by discrimination based on race, colour, ethnic or national origin, civil status, religion, creed, political conviction, language, sex, sexual orientation, social condition, age, personal handicap" etc. (Charter of Students'

Rights, Part 1, 2.1).

This excerpt applies only to students. Faculty members fall under McGill's equity policy: "McGill University is committed to employment equity and in particular to providing equal employment opportunities consistent with the provisions of the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms."

Honora Shaughnessy, director of the Employment Equity Office, said that Equity does not have a specific mandate to deal with issues of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

"No one has ever come to me specifically complaining [about] sexual orientation... The Equity Office doesn't have a mandate," she said, adding that no equity office in Canada does. "That's just the way it is."

According to the office of the principal and vice-principals, Shaughnessy is the administration's spokesperson on this issue.

Fortunately for staff members, the Québec Charter was the first human rights document in Canada to specifically entrench the right to freedom from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

McGill's scanty policies on this issue are considered inadequate by members of both the student and faculty communities.

"I haven't kind of grouped harassment on the basis on any of those things, but there continue to be a number of students who will bring these issues forth, in terms of either remarks faculty or teachers made that they find offensive," said Estelle Hopmeyer, ombudsperson for students.

"I think it would be very helpful if there was a more [comprehensive] policy on any kind of harassment," she added.

"I know from having talked to other universities, McGill is behind the times,"

Sean Addis, administrator of Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay and Transgendered students of McGill (LBGTM).

"There is no official policy," said Carter. "To have it worded out, specifically, would make sure someone goes ahead [with filing a grievance]."

Addis commented that "A lot of times LGBT issues are neglected, are put to the side... I know from having talked to other universities, McGill is behind the times."

Good for a trip to the dentist, but...

One measure of an institution's attitude toward homosexuality is the extent to which it offers its employees same-sex benefits.

According to Lepage, McGill extends monetary benefits, such as Medicare and the dental plan, to same-sex spouses as per the Québec Charter.

To qualify for these rights, the employee and his/her partner must meet the same standards a common-law heterosexual couple would, that is, they must have lived together for three years. Lepage mentioned that a letter is adequate proof of this.

However, McGill does not extend same-sex benefits in terms of time if an employee's partner becomes sick or if one of their in-laws dies.

"To me, being gay is being human, and I don't see why we should be denied what has been granted to everyone," said Lepage. "It's inconsiderable that some kinds [of people] would be denied the right to funeral rights."

Lepage added that LAGEM is not a highly visible organisation on campus (the *Daily* talked to several people who were not sure it still existed).

"We are made up of people involved in various organisations anyway," said Lepage, who keeps a list of phone numbers to help members find assistance.

"We don't feel the need of making a big display," he concluded.

Making "a big display" is particularly difficult when your members don't always want to be seen. Lepage would not say how many members LAGEM has and mentioned that it is often easier for students to 'come out' than employees.

"The younger people are much more confident, and there are more resources for them to know that they are not alone," said Lepage. "Employees tend to keep a low profile. Usually, if they get along with people, they might open up, but they keep it very quiet..."

"You don't give any lead to it, but you don't deny or confirm," he added. "I think the higher they go into the hierarchy, especially at McGill, the less you're going to hear about it."

Taking action

Students at McGill are taking steps to find out to what extent the "atmosphere of homophobia" still exists at McGill and how it can be addressed.

Members of LBGTM and the Students' Society plan to ask students to fill out a questionnaire about heterosexism on campus.

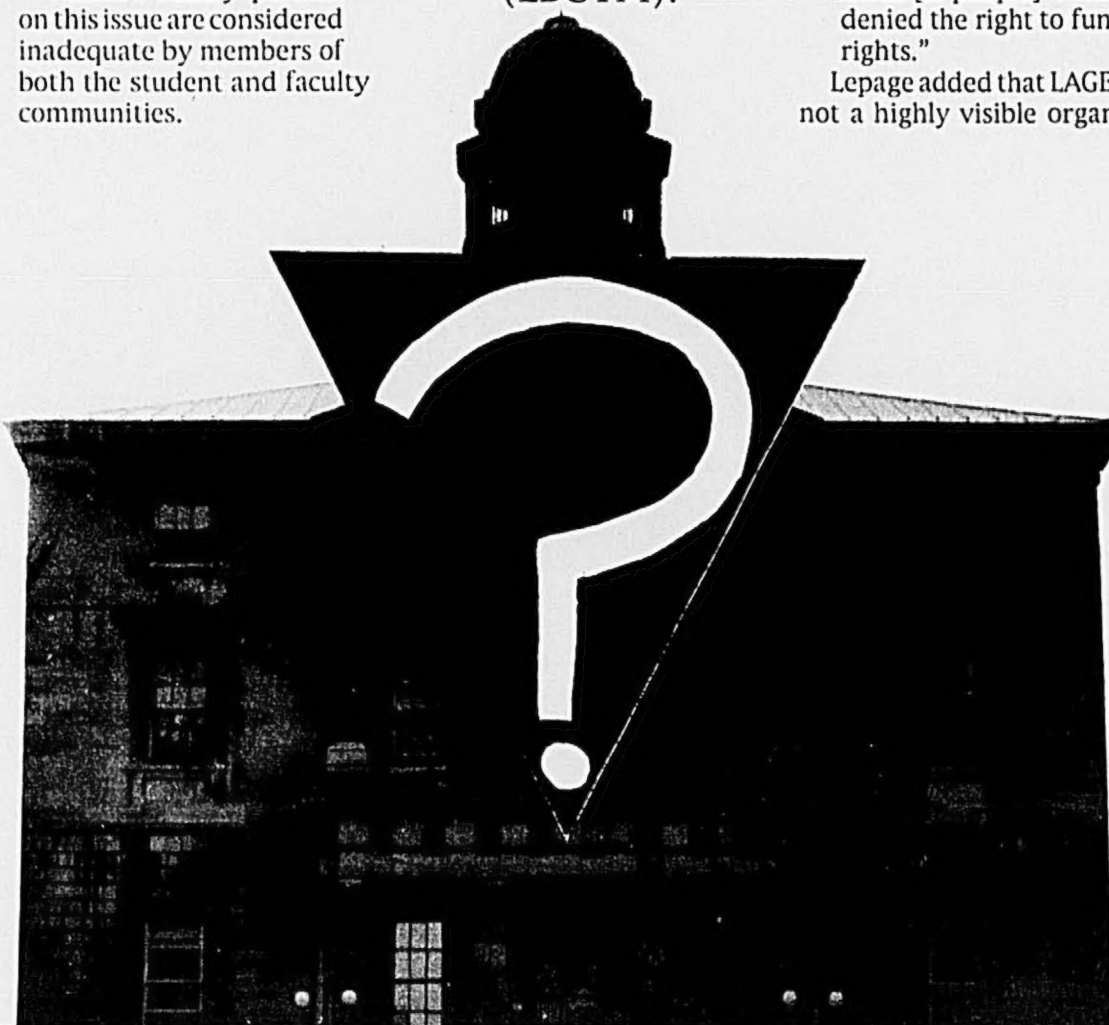
"McGill's behind the times in a lot of things," said Addis. "Now it's time to just show the Dean of Students, this is what we got through our questionnaire.... It's an actual fact, it's not just people whining."

Addis and Grushcow hope that the questionnaire will give students and administrators specific areas on which to focus, like residence life, Student Services, the Students' Society or course curricula.

"I think we need a policy and I think we need to get directions," said Grushcow.

Grushcow expects the questionnaires to be available at tables around campus in the third week in January.

For more information on Lesbian and Gay Employees of McGill (LAGEM), call Raynald Lepage at 398-4711, or write to LAGEM, c/o Raynald Lepage, Department of Rare Books, McLennan Library.



Worried about



by Idella Sturino

Although Ontario Premier Mike Harris has taken no official stance on gay and lesbian rights in the province, recent decisions made by the Harris government have members of the queer community wondering.

A decision not to re-introduce legislation to give same-sex couples equal benefits as opposite-sex couples — an initiative the Rae government tried unsuccessfully — seems to reflect the Harris government's general attitude.

"(Same sex benefits are) not a priority for the government, not something they were elected on," said David Lancaster, a special assistant to Rosedale Conservative MPP Al Leach, the attorney-general.

A similar decision was made in July, when the government decided to pull out of a court challenge initiated by the previous NDP government against the federal Income Tax Act. The intervention was made on behalf of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, which argued that the Act's definition of spouse was unconstitutional because it referred to heterosexual couples only.

In addition, the government recently reversed the province's position on a ruling on

the provincial Family Law Act. Marian Boyd, then attorney-general, had tried unsuccessfully to change the Act's definition of spouse to include same-sex couples and later argued that the definition, left unchanged, was unconstitutional because it discriminated on the grounds of sexual orientation. The Rae government had submitted its opposition as an intervenor in a civil action suit. However, a Harris government lawyer, Robert Charney, effectively sided with the law's validity as it stands in a submission to the court in September.

Other ominous signs that affect Ontarians both within and outside the queer community include cuts to social services, cooperative housing and community-based centres.

Micheal Shapcott of the Co-operative Housing Association of Ontario talks about the recent Harris decision to kill 385 new subsidised housing



priorities

projects, including a gay and lesbian co-op in Toronto. According to Shapcott, these kinds of housing initiatives have been particularly important for gays and lesbians. Like single mothers, people of colour and people with disabilities, "gays and lesbians have long been marginalised by the private housing market and the only good housing for them has been co-op housing,"

and special health services, the government recently announced a \$1.7 million cut to an HIV assistance programme and a further \$77 000 trimmed from an AIDS prevention and control program. While these cuts affect all Ontarians, the proportion of people living with AIDS is higher among the gay male community than within the province as a whole. However,

Harris cuts hit queer community hard

Shapcott said.

He added that community initiatives within co-ops have set aside many of the existing units for people living with AIDS. Those who did not find housing under these initiatives, however, will have a difficult time finding adequate housing because of a July decision to freeze the construction of new units.

"What (the Harris government) has done is frozen existing stock, and there's no hope they'll be new stock in coming years for the growing demand, which is very strong," said Shapcott.

In addition to cuts to housing, hospitals and special health services, the government recently announced a \$1.7 million cut to an HIV assistance programme and a further \$77 000 trimmed from an AIDS prevention and control program. While these cuts affect all Ontarians, the proportion of people living with AIDS is higher among the gay male community than within the province as a whole. However,

the group that is currently contracting AIDS at the fastest rate is general population between the ages of 18 and 25.

Harris' cuts may hit people living with AIDS the hardest. Finance Minister David Tsibouchi's infamous \$90-a-month diet, for example, is not adequate for anyone, let alone someone living with an illness like AIDS and has special nutritional needs. According to advocates, poverty is a reality for many people living with AIDS.

Cuts to community centres may also have an impact on AIDS-related services. In early October, the government announced a total of \$6.3 million in cuts to neighbourhood community-based centres, effective as of January 1. Several of these centres have had up to 80 per cent of their funding cut. Many provide AIDS-related services, such as outreach, counseling and preventative education.

Summarising the effects of the Harris cuts, Toronto City Councilor Kyle Rae told *eye* magazine earlier this month, "The Tory government doesn't care about street youth, HIV-positive youth, the poor or the City of Toronto."

Inching their way out of the mainstream

by Sonia Verma

Not all Toronto students went back to school as usual in September. This year, the Toronto Board of Education launched an innovative programme to specifically address the educational and emotional needs of gay and lesbian youth.

The Triangle Programme provides an alternative school for students aged 16-21 who have experienced physical or emotional abuse in mainstream schools because of their sexual orientation.

"The Triangle Programme is designed to respond to the failure of mainstream schools to be inclusive," explained John Campey, an openly gay Toronto School Board Trustee who helped to initiate the programme.

It is hoped that the programme will offer vulnerable students a refuge from the homophobia and harassment present in mainstream schools. "These kids have endured verbal harassment, been beaten up and have been denied representation in the curriculum," Campey explained.

The Triangle Programme is one of several specialty schools opened as an extension of the

Oasis alternative schools programme. Oasis was created under the Rae government (1990-1995) in order to accommodate students who have fallen out of the mainstream system. The schools offer specialised curricula based on specific needs of individual students.

This existing institutional framework meant that the Triangle Programme and the Nighana Programme that addresses the needs of black students were initiated with little difficulty. The implementation of these programmes was carried out on an exclusively administrative level in order to avoid a potential right-wing backlash.

The classes, which are limited to 25 students and one teacher each, focus on individual learning and independent study. Supporters of the Triangle Programme say that gay and lesbian students' specific needs are more effectively addressed in a student-friendly learning environment than in what Campey called the "educational factory" of mainstream schools.

But some critics of the pro-

gramme claim that it may do more harm than good. They say it isolates gay and lesbian students by placing them on the periphery of the greater student body.

The programme is not intended to actively segregate students. Those who have enrolled are unable to cope in mainstream schools. Many had dropped out or had been frustrated enough to consider it. The Triangle Programme is designed to offer them a choice.

The programme provides these students with an opportunity to succeed in a gay-positive environment. Classes are taught by an openly gay teacher in a space donated by the Metropolitan Community Church, which has a large gay congregation.

David Rayside, vice-president of University College and founder of the University of Toronto's Committee on Homophobia maintained, "It

is not an attempt to take people out of school, it is a transitional stage aimed at people who have already dropped out of school."

Rayside, however, acknowledged that the reintegration of Triangle Programme students is an important challenge. "It is a difficult issue. It may be hard to re-integrate these students when they leave such a secure environment," he said.

There is also the risk that creating separate classes for gays and lesbians will reduce the pressure for mainstream schools to accommodate the needs of marginalised students.

However, both Campey and Rayside argued the contrary. "The programme makes gay and lesbian issues more visible, creating a higher awareness right across the board," Campey said.

The Triangle Programme is only one element in a series of

curricular and policy reforms executed by the Toronto Board of Education to reflect the diverse educational needs of its students. Changes in curriculum, an inclusive sexual harassment policy, support groups and equity work represent a significant reassessment of less accommodating Board procedures.

Because the programme is still in its initial phases, the impact of students returning to mainstream schools and, to a greater extent, the overall success of the programme won't be known for years to come.

According to Campey, comprehensive change as demonstrated by the Triangle programme has been "quite successful." However, the fight for gay and lesbian rights in the school system is still an uphill battle. "Change tends to occur in inches," Rayside commented.

Coming to grips with diversity

THE BISEXUALITY DEBATE IN MONTRÉAL

by Melanie Newton

The Gay and Lesbian Community Centre of Montréal. The Gay and Lesbian Film Festival. Diffusion gaie et lesbienne. Association gaie et lesbienne d'UQAM.

Once upon a time, organisations like the ones listed above stood out as symbols of queer unity and activism. Now they are just as noticeable for something which they *don't* say — bisexual.

Many activists see this omission of bisexuals as a reflection of ignorance about bisexuality at best, and blatant biphobia (prejudice against bisexuals) at worst.

"There's a sort of classic argument that bisexuals only need recognition in so far as they are gay. The other [straight] aspect of their personality is covered by the greater society and we don't need to cater to that," says David D'Andrea, facilitator of LBGT's bisexual discussion group.

According to D'Andrea the term "gay" once genuinely included all non-heterosexuals. However, as the movement gained strength there was a move to exclude "embarrassing elements" — like feminists, bisexuals and transgendered people — from the struggle.

LBGT's Political Coordinator Chris Carter says this neglect has limited the

number of services catering to bisexuals.

"Discussion groups, support groups, bars, magazines are not available to bisexuals. The Montréal community has never done political action directly pertaining to bisexuals at all," says Carter.

Controversy surrounded last year's Divers/Cité march, Montréal's gay pride parade, when Ki Namaste, the only bisexual or transgendered person scheduled to speak, was cut from the programme at the last minute.

Carter points to the Image and Nation Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, organised by Diffusions gaie et lesbienne, as one of the few non-university queer events which deals with bisexual issues.

Explaining the silence

Why are there so few services for queer people and why has no bisexual movement developed here?

D'Andrea says there is an age division across North America's queer movement.

"Certainly in a lot of gay

groups, these [older] people didn't come of age in a time when bisexuality was an issue. They don't understand it...," says D'Andrea.

The lack of bi-positive organisations places overwhelming pressure on the few that exist. Montréal bisexuals lost an important forum this year with the demise of Bi-The-Way, the city's only other bisexual

services are available from one year to the next. But given that Québec's queer community is allegedly the province's largest minority group, these points don't fully explain the absence of a bisexual movement in Montréal.

Another explanation may be the lack of communication between campus queer organisations — where most of the movement's major theoretical issues are discussed — and the wider Montréal community.

And then there is the language divide. Chantal, a francophone bisexual and a former Université de

Montréal student explains, "You'd have to be an anglophone student to find out about [LBGT's bisexual discussion group]...."

Recently, queer groups at French and English universities and CEGEPs in Montréal tried to form a Queer Federation. But language problems and the issue of bisexuality ultimately contributed to the plan's

failure.

According to Carter, one of the francophone organisations was unwilling to include bisexual rights in the federation's Constitution.

Signs of the times at McGill

In 1992, the Gays and Lesbians of McGill (GALOM) was one of the city's first organisations to change its name to include bisexuals, becoming the Lesbians, Bisexuals and Gays of McGill. To overcome biphobia and sexism, LBGM also introduced a non-discrimination clause in their Constitution.

This year the name was changed again to Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay and Transgender Students of McGill.

"It's unmistakable that it's getting better just in the few years that I've been at McGill. But it used to be accepted to question, within LBGM (then called GALOM), whether bisexuals actually exist and whether we need to accept them," says D'Andrea.

According to D'Andrea, the bisexual discussion group was also started "because, if you go to the general discussion group, it's mainly homosexual as opposed to bisexual..."

Opinion differs on how LBGT's reforms have changed gay and lesbian members' attitudes towards bisexuality.

"Just as lesbians and gay men refuse the narrow options of compulsory heterosexuality, we refuse to be trapped by a hetero/homo man/woman split." — Bisexual and transgender activist Ki Namaste.

discussion group besides LBGT's.

Bi-The-Way facilitator Caroline Côté had to end the group because of the enormous strain on the group's organisers. Côté looked for someone to take it over, but could find no one willing.

The constant turn-over makes it hard to know what

A MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE

by Karen Tamaki and Chris Carter

The rift between men and women in the queer community

Many suggest that the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community is merely a marriage of convenience, a temporal community united by the pursuit of a few common goals and our status as second class citizens.

But some, like Peter Wallet, an LBGT facilitator, believe this union is necessary.

"We [lesbian, bisexual, gay and transgender people] should take other groups under our wings," stated Wallet.

"We are all not liked, we are all discriminated against and we all have to deal with gender and sexuality issues," he added.

However, because discrimination is so pervasive throughout society, it is inevitably a part of the queer community.

In interviewing students, many saw this sort of

segregation manifested in community bars and discussion groups. Chris M., peer support referral coordinator of LBGT, noted "There is segregation with clubs. Even supposedly mixed clubs are dominated by men. Therefore, women prefer to go to women-only clubs."

The desire for segregated groups can also be found in the organisation of LBGT's social groups, which recently added a women's group due to the large percentage of men in the general discussion group. Is this reinforcing the gap between men and women?

Chris M. saw this segregation as inappropriate. But Wallet explained that, "Women are a neglected sector of society. [Discussion groups] provide a forum solely concerning [women's] issues. Sexism is inherent in the gay community, and it is unavoidable due to our society."

Meredith Cohen, an LBGT general discussion group facilitator, added to this sentiment.

"It is not that lesbians [and bisexual women] are uncomfortable around gay [and bisexual] men or vice versa, it's just that women feel strange if they walk into a club or room that is dominated by... the opposite sex."

Cohen continued to acknowledge that sexism, misogyny and male-bashing is a problem within the community. She said, however, "I don't expect to walk up to gay men and have them be sexist. It's not a special problem within our community. Comparing ourselves to other factions, we are much more healthy. We have all gone through an analysis of ourselves, our community, and the world in which we live, and we are therefore much better at understanding these elements. Therefore, we expect

a more enlightened view [from queer people]."

For Hannah Rogers, a political coordinator at LBGT, the separation between men and women in forums such as discussion groups is not so much a matter of sexism as a lack of common interests.

"[The rift between men and women] partly is a result of sexism, and partly it's due to the fact that gay men and lesbians have few common interests. What do lesbians and gay men really have in common?"

Rogers went on to note that she often felt like a token female offering opinions on gay male issues at the general discussion group.

"The women's group is there because women specifically wanted a group. If men wanted one, there would be a men's group. It's not a matter of segregation. LBGT speaks to the needs of the people in its

organisation," said Sean Addis, LBGT's administrator.

"We're trying to meet everyone's concerns. It's the same as the bisexual group. We still have the general group as an option for the entire community to participate together."

Addis noted that the most important thing is to provide a safe environment for all members. He also pointed out that the inclusion of a women's group in LBGT has definitely increased the female membership, as was demonstrated by the high proportion of women (over 50 per cent) at LBGT's most recent dance at Gert's.

As a community composed of people of all races, religions, and genders, it is necessary to recognise differences. However, as gender roles become less rigidly defined, it is increasingly true that everyone's issues are everyone else's issues.

GETTING THE BALL ROLLING



by Anup Grewal

Lesbian presence felt at world conference on women

Jen Mooney, a bisexual, said her experience has been good. "It was really, really positive, very accepting — no pressure to say that I was bi or straight or lesbian," said Mooney.

Eric, a 20 year old student who neither defines himself as bisexual nor straight, feels differently. He agrees that LBGT has changed a lot but finds that they have catered to stereotypes and have "played down diversity."

Where do we go from here?

Most people agree that the movement has made some steps forward on the issue of bisexuality, but say more must be done.

D'Andrea says there have been bi-positive improvements to Montréal's queer services, particularly help-lines for people who are questioning their sexuality or just need to talk about it.

But D'Andrea is critical of the queer Montréal media, which he says is "not really cognizant of diversity."

Meanwhile, John Rioux of the Gay and Lesbian Community Centre of Montréal (CCGLM), the only one of its kind in the city, claims that

people are starting to realize that, within the community, there is diversity."

However, some see the CCGLM as unwilling to represent the whole community.

"Last year, a friend of mine asked a representative of the CCGLM specifically what their line on bisexuality was. [The representative] said he doesn't think that bisexuality exists, that you're either gay or straight," says bisexual Concordia student Tamara Vukov.

D'Andrea says more queer organisations need to accept responsibility for addressing bisexual issues. He sees open discussion, with knowledgeable bisexuals present, as a necessary first step. In Carter's opinion, more organisations should take a "zero tolerance" stand against biphobia.

In the speech which she was to read at Divers/Cité, Montréal's Ki Namaste says "... As bisexuals and transgenders... [w]e do not just offer new or different names to call oneself.

"We pose a fundamental challenge to the ways in which gender and sexuality are organised in this society. Just as lesbians and gay men refuse the narrow options of compulsory heterosexuality, we refuse to be trapped by a hetero/homoman/woman split."

On Sept. 8, women sitting through a key plenary session at the UN Beijing Conference on Women were confronted by a banner reading "Lesbian Rights are Human Rights."

The plenary ground to a halt and guards quickly removed the disruptors — lesbian participants — who had wanted to call attention to the lesbian presence at the conference.

This event is telling of the dynamics played out in both the Non-Governmental Organisations conference in Huairou, China and the official conference in Beijing. Women from more than 189 countries gathered for the first two weeks in September to discuss the Platform for Action, hailed by many as a groundbreaking document for recognising the diverse lives of women everywhere.

But as the conference drew to a close in the wee hours of Sept. 15, a much-anticipated clause recognising the right to sexual orientation was deleted from the Platform because more than 30 countries remained in opposition to it.

While this was a disappointment for lesbians and other women, some felt that all was not lost. Julie Dorf

also been at the Nairobi women's conference in 1985, was "outstanding." These nations all added supplementary clauses to the conference report stating that in their individual countries they will recognise sexual orientation as unacceptable grounds for discrimination.

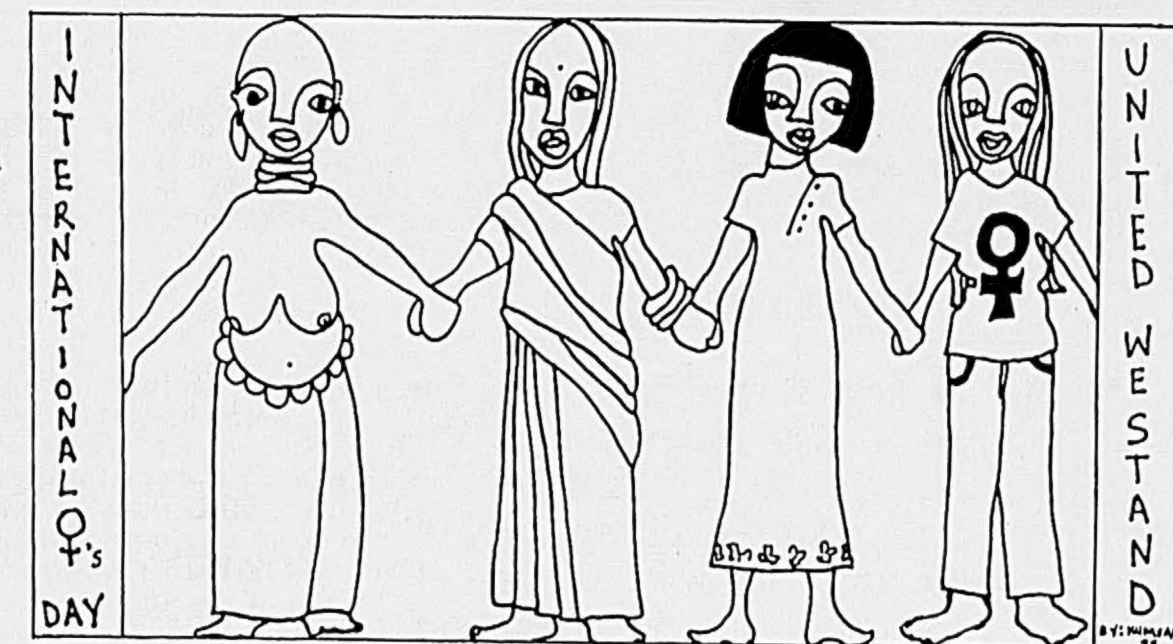
Canadian initiative

The inclusion of the term sexual orientation was a point of debate from the start. Canada had introduced the term at the final preparatory meeting for the Beijing conference in New York at the end of April.

Sheila Reghr of Status of Women Canada said that this is "entirely consistent with Canadian policy."

According to Reghr, Canada requested a "descriptive paragraph [which included the term sexual orientation] to recognise women's diversity" in the conference's Platform. This request was supported by the 54 countries of the Economic Commission of Europe.

However, there was not enough time to discuss the inclusion of sexual orientation, so the Commission put the term in brackets in four places in the document, leaving the decision for the actual conference.



According to one Canadian official quoted in the *Globe and Mail* Sept. 9, the fact that "sexual orientation" was not included is not surprising: "Recognition of this form of discrimination is not an easy one for many countries."

Yet, as Reghr pointed out, Canada and 30 other countries, including the European Union nations, Australia, Cuba, Israel, Slovenia and South Africa supported including the term "sexual orientation." This,

sexual autonomy. We can do what we want with our bodies; we have the right to say 'no'."

The clause Dorf referred to asserts that women's human rights include the rights to control and decide matters related to their sexuality, free from coercion, discrimination or violence. There is also a clause which notes that "various forms of the family exist."

Give and take

For Rachel Rosenbloom, also of the International Gay and Commission, this clause is "very good." In an October interview with the *Advocate*, Rosenbloom said she was hopeful that lesbian rights will be recognised at the next UN women's conference. The trend seems to be positive: At the Nairobi conference in 1985, only one nation openly supported lesbian rights, while over 30 did in Beijing.

In the meantime, Dorf hailed the opportunity the Beijing conference provided for lesbians to network and educate. Dorf said she was "pleased with the large lesbian caucus," as well as the demonstrations and the tent lesbian women were given to hold any events they wanted. There were only seven of these "diversity tents" and lesbian organisers, who had lobbied for one all year, were encouraged by the fact that they were given one.

According to Dorf, the tent was "constantly filled," with ad hoc workshops and social events. "It was such a place for an exchange of ideas and there were many women who came just because they wanted to know more about lesbians," she said.

Dorf added that it was "inspiring to have organised our visibility with such minimal opposition."

"We left excited about the

presence of and solidarity for lesbians in the women's movement," commented Dorf.

Impossible to ignore

For Dorf, the dynamics at the Beijing conference reflect the changes in the women's movement in the last ten years. Despite the presence of such individuals as Hayes and continued opposition from orthodox Catholic and orthodox Islamic representatives, Dorf asserted

show overt lesbophobia."

She explained that "There are still some clear difficulties with homophobia in the women's movement, but it is changing. It was pretty amazing how the couple of incidents of intolerance were ignored, were hissed at: It was not an okay position."

Dorf said that the involvement of lesbian women in reproductive health work, peace work and women's issues makes it difficult to ignore women's right to express their sexual orientation.

She noted that another important development is the internationalisation of the lesbian movement. The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission released a document at the conference entitled "Unspoken Rules: Sexual Orientation and Women's Human Rights." This is a compilation of stories by 31 lesbian women, from as many countries, documenting lesbian life and marginalisation around the world.

It is no longer only North American or European lesbian women who are speaking out. Pointing to the growing voice of African, Asian and Latin American lesbians, Dorf said that it is becoming "impossible" to ignore their presence.

CHALLENGING THE

An interview with

by Derek Fung

Maggi Rubenstein is a sexologist and dean of students at the Institute for the Advanced Study of Sexuality in San Francisco. She was also one of the first people to speak out on bisexual issues.

In 1976, Rubenstein co-founded San Francisco's BiCenter with Harriet Levy and David Laurier. It was the first centre devoted - but not limited to - bisexuals. There was worldwide interest in and support for this ground-breaking community centre, which was the first to provide counseling services to bisexuals.

When the rise of AIDS in the early '80s forced many people back into the closet, the BiCenter lost a sizeable proportion of its membership. Larger community centres and support groups, having begun to recognise the existence of bisexuals, expanded to meet their needs. The BiCenter eventually closed down in 1984 due to financial problems and volunteer burn-out.

In 1987, Rubenstein participated in the creation of the Bay Area Bisexual Network after an inspirational meeting with the East Coast BiNetwork. Today, the BABN publishes *Anything that Moves*, a magazine with worldwide distribution that is produced by and for bisexuals and their family and friends.

Rubenstein is still a vocal participant in the bisexual movement and was honoured as Grand Marshall of the LGBT pride parade in San Francisco in 1992. The *Daily* had the opportunity to talk with her on July 8, 1995 about where the bisexual movement is now and how far it has come.

Daily: What inspired you to come out in 1970, at a time when there wasn't much to identify with, when there wasn't a real community? And how did this lead to the formation of the BiCenter?

Maggi Rubenstein: The Stonewall riots against the police [in 1969, which raised the issue of discrimination against queer people] really made me realise that the issue of sexual rights was going to have to be addressed at some point... I've started other organisations, and you know, why not do something for bisexuals? [So I asked myself] "how do I start doing that?" Well, I gotta put my ass on the line... [But] "What can I say? Where do I say it? How do I say it? What do I talk about?"... So, I decided that the Center was the obvious place to begin... I thought, "Gee we should all join together."

I didn't think there would be such turf issues - "This is us [lesbians and gays] over here and that is you [bisexuals] over there." I have had some people actually say, "Well, why don't you do your own parade?" or "Why don't you go over there and do your movement?" Well I said I don't believe in separate but equal. I think we all need to support each other. The more we are together, the more parallel we are.

You talk about how you don't like the idea of separate but equal, so what do you think of the bicentric movement in Washington D.C. where they just fight for bisexual rights?

I feel that there are some people who need to just be with their own group in order to get

a sense of power and importance. Certainly that is happening in the civil rights and the women's rights movement...

I know a lot of people need to get a power base, get a sense of their own pride and a sense of their own community and to speak from that. I support that, but I think in the bisexual movement that is a rather narrow view, because... it is important to support all people's rights. If anybody is oppressed, we are all oppressed and whatever the struggle...

I think sometimes that it has been easier and more comfortable, in a crazy kind of way, to hang out with the gay and lesbian community and push for our rights there, than to [fight for our rights] in the general community... There are a lot of bisexual people, but being bisexual is not just about getting it on. There are some bisexuals that don't want to think about or acknowledge the sexual aspect of being bisexual. Some people get too political, but, well, "Let's not talk about the sex part because we don't want people to think that the all bisexuals are obsessed with sex"...

I have been looking at the

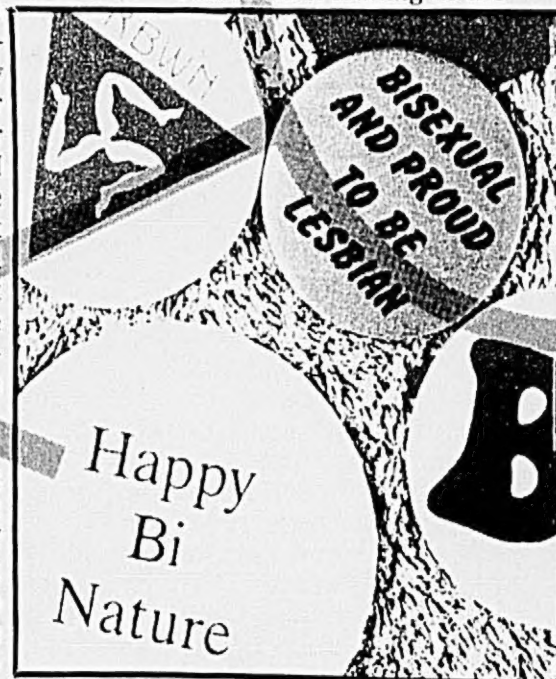
too. We're not all just completely and absolutely female or male. We all have femaleness and maleness in us; emotionally, intellectually, and physically sometimes... As Marjorie Garber says in her book, *Vice Versa*, it is a new way of looking at human sexuality. It turns everything upside down.

About this idea of continuums. Do you see it as a real scale? Do you think that we really can put a scale to sexuality?

Well of course I don't want to put a scale on sexuality; I would rather not use any labels at all. If we were not oppressed, we wouldn't need to use any labels. There wouldn't need to have a gay rights movement or a women's rights movement or a bisexual movement or any other rights movement if there wasn't oppression. If everybody accepted everybody else as they are and celebrated their differences as well as their similarities, there wouldn't be a need for labels.

My feeling is that the more people understand that we all fit along [the continuum] somewhere, the less people will continue to dichotomise... Even among the bisexual community, [people say] "You guys are in the middle." No. We are... the Kinsey scale from 1 to 5...

Garber's book, *Vice Versa*, quoted me as saying that 80 per cent of the population could be bisexual if we acknowledge our fantasies, our dreams, our interests, our crushes. If normal curves hold true, then maybe 10 per cent of the population is totally gay and lesbian and maybe 10 per cent is totally heterosexual and maybe everybody else is potentially



continuum of gender, the continuum of race, the continuum of sexuality. I think we all fit on those continuums somewhere. In the transgender community, I have become more sensitised to the fact that we are all along the gender scale

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We will always have to be spoken about; it will be forgotten about if it isn't. I want people to read Marjorie Garber's book and I want people to read Martin Weinberg's book [*Dual Attraction*], even though it had some flaws... I want people to begin to talk to each other, questioning and challenging some of the values that run society, false values that white is best, that marriage is best, that monogamy is best, that hetero-

A LOOK BEYOND THE WIG

**TRANSSEXUALITY AND MY CONVERSATION
WITH OLIVIA JENSEN**

by Derek Fung

I was sitting in the Faculty Club a little past 7:00 pm waiting for Olivia Jensen, a McGill Professor. Thinking over the questions on transgender issues which I had prepared, I didn't notice the striking woman standing right in front of me. Very tall and stately, with an air of self-confidence, she had, arriving just before me, gone to put her things in the coat room.

Introductions out of the way, we walked into the lounge and Olivia called up for two pints of beer. Then we sat down and began to talk.

And so began one of the most fascinating (and entertaining) conversations I have ever had.

Olivia, who has been teaching in the department of geophysics since 1973, has been known at McGill both as a man and a woman. These days, after undergoing hormone therapy and sexual-reassignment surgery (SRS) in the early '90s, Olivia makes her way in the feminine form. Prior to this, Olivia was married for 13 years and has two children, 13 and 16 years old.

I asked if the departments of Engineering and Geophysics had reacted awkwardly to the change. Olivia assured me that everyone had been relatively accepting.

"My colleagues at McGill have been proper and good. [But] they haven't gone out of their way to accommodate me... It's a very subtle discrimination... It's never neglected, it is factored into who I am. In a strange way, it's okay, I want them to factor it in, just not negatively," she said.

Most people, she said, once put in the situation of having to deal with a transsexual, simply take it in stride.

"I expect to be treated well. I don't expect to be humiliated, discounted, harassed... But it does happen at some level," she said, adding that most instances have been temporary with people that she won't see again.

"[Such instances] are part of the woodwork of life," she noted.

I am a transsexual woman

Transition is an essential part of adjusting to a new gender

"I want [people] to read a transsexual woman that commands immediate respect. That's what I want, that is the deal I try to make with the world. I don't want to be hidden."

role. The process involves hormone therapy and SRS. The Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association has set strict guidelines for candidates who apply for the treatment.

These include getting written approval from a certified therapist after at least three months of counseling and living full-time in the

change their sex and slip into the mainstream. They don't want to be "read" (that is to have people discover that they have had sex reassignment).

Olivia, who is very open about her transsexuality, doesn't share this view.

"I want [people] to read a transsexual woman that commands immediate respect. That's what I want, that is the deal I try to make with the world. I don't want to be hidden. That doesn't do anything. That doesn't make a statement, not that I want my life to be a statement either, really," she stated. "My truth is this. It isn't that I am a female woman who has finally been fixed. That's not the issue at all."

Related to this, is gender etiquette. One inevitable question is what terms to use when addressing transsexuals — he or she, Mr. or Ms., man or woman?

For Olivia, it's important to respect the person's decisions and refer to their present gender. Usually though, she said this hasn't been a problem.

"The world is so good, so positive, that even if [people read me], they know how I want to be read. That's gender etiquette," she said.

Who's normal?

These days, everyone seems to be trying to explain transsexuality and homosexuality. Some scientists look for genes and others compare the size of the hypothalamus.

But it is important not be caught up with the 'norm'. Normal isn't necessarily

better. "normal is only a statistical measure. It is only what most people are doing. It isn't good or bad."

As Olivia observed, Different sexualities — homo/bi/transsexuality — arose naturally. They have evolved as part of human experience — but haven't always had an outlet for expression in society.

"[But lately] the world has opened the door wider for us... I think lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transsexual people are the healthy variations of humanity. Only some moralists don't like it and that's a small reason [for discrimination]," said Olivia.

She did acknowledge,

"Normal is only a statistical measure. It is only what most people are doing. It isn't good or bad."

however, that many people still dismiss transsexuality as aberrant. She commented that if a pre-natal screen for transsexuality were ever developed, "Not many moms and

dads... would say that it is wonderful [to have a transsexual child]. They would jump to abortion and that is disappointing."

But no one has the right to take away possibilities for a person's future, simply because they are different. It may just be that transsexuality, as well as homo/bisexuality, is seen as a disease or disorder by many because they lack experience with it and are scared of it.

"To find a cure for transsexuality means that it is bad or a disease. It [undermines] the evolution of one's transsexuality. It would be a tragedy to me to remove that possibility. It denies a future. That is immoral."

Despite the lack of awareness, Olivia remains positive and proud of her transsexuality. "For a long time, I wished that I had been born a female. It's not the case any more. It's not the way I would have liked my past to have been. I like my past to be exactly as it was because that brings me here... exactly where I should be."



Olivia Jensen

HELPING THE BODY FIT THE MIND

THE SEX REASSIGNMENT PROCESS

LB
GT

by Kevin Siu

An individual who wishes to undergo sex reassignment must follow the guidelines dictated by the Benjamin Standards. Initially approved in 1979 at the Sixth Gender Dysphoria Symposium, the Benjamin Standards were intended as a "statement of the standard of care to be offered to dysphoric patients." The standards have been widely accepted.

First, the applicant must obtain the written approval of a certified therapist after no less than three months of consultation. During the year before the actual sex reassignment surgery (SRS), the individual must undergo Real Life Training, in which he/she presents himself/herself full-time in the other gender role. The presentation extends itself to previously unconscious activities such as bathroom usage and the choice of title (i.e. Mr., Ms., Mrs., Miss).

During this preparation period, the individual will also likely undergo hormone therapy to prepare the body for the SRS.

Male to female, female to male

During the estrogen therapy, the male-to-female (M2F) candidate will immediately experience faster hair and nail growth, the growth of softer and thicker hair, and moodiness as his body adjusts to the female hormones.

The genetic male will gradually lose muscle mass and develop more fat tissue in the breast and hip areas. The penis will lose its ability to function and the testicles will shrink. The individual's sex drive will also decrease dramatically. Though the male's bone structure and voice will not be altered, physically, the applicant will appear almost completely female after one or two years.

For female-to-male (F2M) candidates, androgen therapy (depo-testosterone is commonly used) will immediately induce muscle growth, particularly in the chest area. The genetic female will also experience facial and body hair growth accompanied by outbreaks of

acne. Like M2F candidates undergoing hormone therapy, the F2M candidate will experience mood swings during the initial adjustment period.

After a year of hormone therapy, the candidate's voice will have deepened. The clitoris will lengthen by about two inches, and there will be beard growth and male pattern baldness. The F2M candidate will probably have stopped menstruating. Apart from the primary sex organ (vagina) and secondary sex organs (breasts), the individual will appear almost completely male.

Although hormone therapy can be reversed, some effects are permanent. Most M2F candidates are permanently infertile after six months of taking estrogen. For F2M candidates taking androgen, the facial hair growth and deepening of the voice are irreversible. Breast growth is also permanent. Most other body changes that occur during hormone therapy will disappear eventually if therapy is discontinued.

Making the move to surgery

The financial costs of SRS being so high (between \$6 000 and \$50 000), many transgendered lack the means to complete the sex reassignment process. Some transgendered also find themselves psychologically unprepared to face the irreversibility of the surgery.

For an M2F candidate, SRS involves four main steps. First, the testicles are removed. The penis is then inverted to create an opening resembling a vagina. The remaining scrotum is used to line the opening, creating a labia. Finally, a portion of the penile tissue is restructured to form the clitoris. The nerve endings from the penis are left intact so that the transsexual is capable of having orgasms.

For a F2M candidate, the procedure is more complex, requiring surgery on both the primary and secondary sex organs. First, the individual must undergo a double mastectomy. Both breasts are

removed, but the nipples are retained and repositioned. This procedure can be performed during the preparation period. After at least a year, the candidate can undergo the hysterectomy, in which the uterus, ovaries and fallopian tubes are removed.

New procedures for creating a penis are being developed, but phalloplasty and metoidioplasty are currently the most common. Metoidioplasty involves using the enlarged clitoris as the basis for the penis. It is a less complex and less expensive procedure than phalloplasty. However, because the resulting penis is only about two inches long, metoidioplasty is not feasible for penile penetration.

The second option is phalloplasty. After a period of electrolysis on the abdomen, the skin the area is used to form a tube of skin. Because the clitoris is positioned underneath the resulting penis, sexual stimulation is still possible but not easy.

A more extensive form of phalloplasty involves the transplant of a forearm nerve into the skin tube. Running into the nerves of the clitoris, the transplanted nerve allows a wide range of sensation. To erect the constructed penis after phalloplasty, there are a number of pumps and inserts that vary in effectiveness.

Gender definition

After SRS, the transsexual must continue hormone treatment for the rest of his/her life. Although certain effects of hormones are permanent, if a

transsexual stops therapy, his/her features will largely return to their original state. Some transsexuals, in particular M2F transsexuals, attend finishing schools after surgery to improve their adoption of the chosen gender role.

The sex reassignment procedure — the preparation, surgery, and post-operation considerations — raises many questions. The Benjamin Standards were developed partially in response to the high correlation between suicide and sex reassignment during the period when SRS was first introduced.

However, there are objections in the transgender community to the stringent guidelines imposed by the Benjamin Standards. Arguments are increasingly being made over the right of transsexuals to determine for themselves when they are ready for surgery.

The debate also questions whether the medical establishment should dictate the behaviour and lifestyle of sex reassignment candidates during the preparation period. Some feel that being required to act a certain way (i.e. take on a dictated gender role) reinforces socially defined distinctions between males and females that may not be valid to a particular individual.

As surgery edges closer to being able to fully reconstruct the body, the legal and health care implications also become more salient. When is an individual considered legally and medically one sex or the other?

Asking whether gender distinction is important in the first place emphasises the fact that transgender issues go beyond just the sex reassignment procedure. As social perceptions of gender roles continue to shift, the process of the mind trying to understand the body becomes a process of helping the body fit the mind.

Sources for this article include: *The New Yorker*, July 11, 1994, the alt.transgenderednewsgroup and the most recent draft of the Benjamin Standards.

Transgender organisations in the Montréal area:

FACT-Québec
Fact, c/o Mrs. Patricia Fisher
Box 293, Côte-des-Neiges
Post Office
5858 Côte-des-Neiges Blvd.
Montréal H3S 2S6

Fact-Québec is a support group for transsexuals, their partners, relatives, friends and professionals in the field. Fact-Québec can also provide speakers to the public.

Club Met
4113 Dorion St.
Montréal H2K 3B8
528-8874

Club Met is a non-sexual support group for transgendered and their partners. Club Met also publishes its own news magazine.

INTERNATIONAL Queer cuts

New Zealand gets first transsexual mayor

Georgina Beyer was elected as the first transsexual mayor of the Wairarapa township in New Zealand.

There have been other examples of transsexual politicians. One of Canada's own transsexual politicians was forced to resign after threats of violence.

Putting the heat on Costa Rica

The Magnus Hirschfeld Center for Human Rights has filed a complaint with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights against Costa Rican police and media harassing queer people.

The commission has a mandate to enforce the American Convention on Human Rights, an agreement between countries in South and North America, making its decisions have the force of law.

Hate legislation visits the US Supreme Court

by Meredith Cohen

You are walking down the street clad in fire engine red bell-bottoms. Shocking is the word. Fiendish. Apparently someone perceives your vintage style as a bit too subversive and offensive for this black and white world. This someone, in a gallant act, rallies up bunches of friends to protect this world and its posterity from this most garish display.

Organisations form (ooh), platforms form (ahh), and with incredulous heads whirling, agendas form (gasp). Suddenly, out vapid hatred and disgust, an amendment is born. It legislates this hatred by constructing legal barriers to all and any members of the bellbottom donning clan. If you partake in this heinous crime, then you will have no

Vigils, rallies, press conferences and teach-ins dominated the Colorado landscape, and that of many other states, the day before the Supreme Court Hearing.

The Amendment, reproduced above, was a first of many attempts by the radical right to besiege local and state governments. It has recently been followed by similar initiatives in Maine, and will be attempted in Idaho and Oregon in 1996.

Should the Supreme Court repeal the Colorado court decision, any member of the queer community — lesbian, gay, or bisexual — residing in the state of Colorado will be stripped of any ability to seek legal redress for discrimination or anti-gay violence.

This would set a precedent of singling out one specific group and drastically limiting their legal and political power. A ruling such as this would not only be detrimental to the queer community, but to the civil rights movement in general.

According to Melinda Paras, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task

AMENDMENT 2

Neither the State of Colorado, through any branches or departments, nor any of its agencies, political subdivisions, municipalities or school districts, shall enact, adopt, or enforce any statute, regulation, ordinance or policy whereby homosexual, lesbian, or bisexual orientation, conduct, practices or relationships shall constitute or otherwise be the basis of or entitle any person or class of persons to have or claim any minority status, quota preferences, protected status, or claim discrimination.

Force, "Amendment 2 doesn't just impact Colorado. As always a Supreme Court hearing sends a powerful signal. In this case the court can stand in defense of equal participation and fair play for all, or it can codify discrimination against a targeted group. If the Supreme Court overturns the repeal, it will be hailed by the radical right as justification for ongoing efforts in other states."

"Special rights" undefined

Do all Americans have the

same right to be a part of the nation's democracy? This is the question which the Supreme Court will answer when it hands down its decision sometime between January and June.

Those who support Amendment 2 contend that through gay rights legislation, the queer community is seeking "special rights". But when asked to specify the "special rights" being sought, Gale Norton, attorney-general of Colorado re-

plied, "We don't really know exactly."

She did, however, offer the example of work quotas which would force anti-gay groups into hiring queer individuals. This could be construed as the accusation of "special rights".

The lack of an adequate definition for what the "special rights" in question are, formed an important part of the defense as it violated the "rational basis" of the amendment. The defense highlighted the fact that dislike is not a rational basis for discriminatory treatment in the face of the law.

Suzanne B. Goldberg, staff attorney at Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, which along with the American Civil Liberties Union worked to defend the Colorado Supreme Court injunction of Amendment 2, said "Amendment 2 is an outrageous violation of the Constitution, and sets out to erect special barriers for the queer community."

It is not always accurate to predict the outcome of a hearing based on its oral arguments. But court observer Kevin Sherrill says he expects the decision to support the original injunction ruled by the Colorado Supreme court.

A ruling in favour of the injunction would be a good one for the civil rights movement in the US. In the '60s, similar legislation was used to



ability to seek legal repercussion if you are discriminated against or even physically harmed. The new legislation prevents you from doing so.

Surely Colorado's Amendment 2 is much different; but it is also quite similar. Replace queer human with human in bellbottoms, and the similarities will be striking, garish even. I am not certain which is more ludicrous.

A powerful signal

Soon after its birth, Amendment 2, the brainchild of the organisation Colorado for Family Values, went straight to the Colorado court system where it was repealed as unconstitutional based on its breach of the First Amendment. Just as quickly, however it was appealed and sent to the Supreme Court where it was heard on October 10.

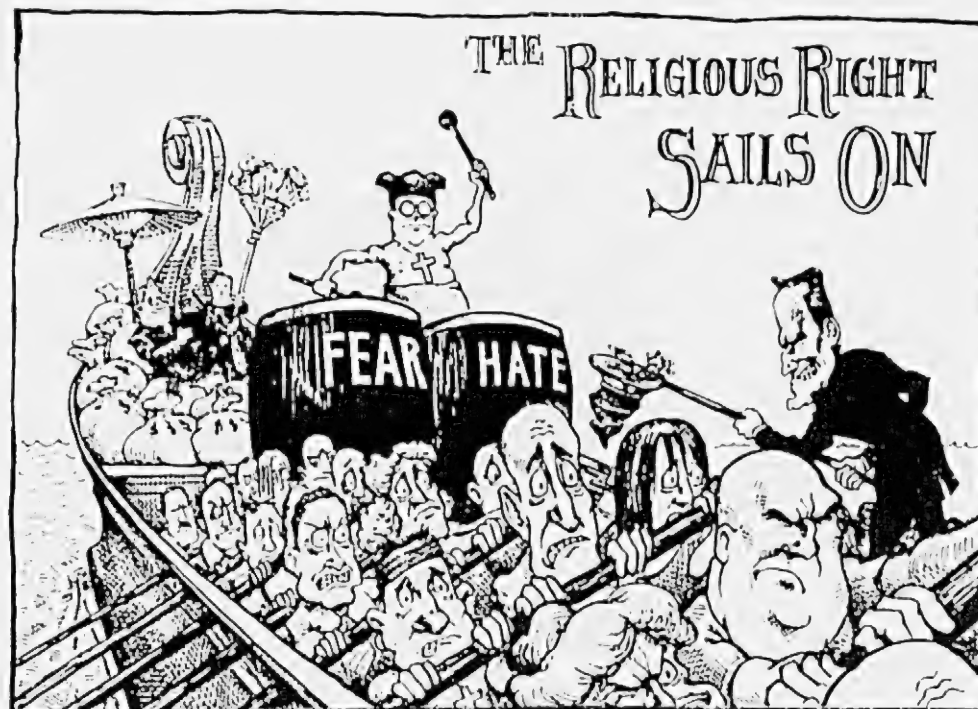


limit the representation of African-Americans.

A ruling against the amendment would also be positive for the Queer Community by sending a signal to the radical right that their legal attempts are unconstitutional.

It will also provide legal precedent for the "Don't question, Don't tell" policy of the military that is expected to be heard by the Supreme Court next year.

For those objecting to Amendment 2, things look hopeful. But the forces proposing such legislation are just as confident. In his resignation statement, the former director and founder of Colorado for Family Values stated "The passion of protecting our children, our lives and, our future from homosexual aggression burns deeply within me." It could be a close battle.



Why do we need a gay gene?

Taking a closer look at the nature vs. nurture debate

by Mera Thompson

DAILY GRAPHIC BY MAX FRANCISCO

As scientists search for a biological explanation for homosexuality, many express concern about the necessity of locating a "gay gene" — and the possible consequences arising therefrom.

As recently as 1974, homosexuality was listed by the American Psychiatric Association as a mental disorder. Even today, more than a few would characterize it as 'deviant' behaviour at best, willful evil at worst.

As such, the possibility of discovering biological proof that homosexuality is a naturally occurring trait has been welcomed by some members of the LGBT community.

However, some object to the direction of recent studies, saying they don't need "justification" for being gay.

Investigative research on the topic has encompassed everything from DNA linkage to tracing fingertip ridges.

Dr. Simon LeVay, a neuroanatomist at the Salk Institute in La Jolla, California, has been noted for his studies comparing brain size in deceased AIDS victims.

LeVay claimed to have discovered innate biological differences when he found notable discrepancies in the sizes of the hypothalami of homosexual and heterosexual men.

Significant evidence has shown, however, that the experience of an individual can affect and alter brain development. As such, many question his assertion that the difference in brain structure is a cause, rather than an effect, of homosexuality.

Above all, the biggest shortfall of LeVay's study was the fact that all the subjects were dead, making a clear assertion of their sexuality impossible.

And the research shows...

Research looking into the possible genetic aspect of homosexuality has yielded more plausible results.

In 1991, researchers Michael Bailey and Richard Pillard discovered the high probability (52 per cent) of

one identical twin being homosexual if the other one was.

They also uncovered similar findings that were lower, but still significant, for non-identical twins, non-twin siblings and adopted brothers (22, 9, and 11 percent, respectively).

But several questions were raised by their findings.

Firstly, if homosexuality were exclusively linked to genetic make-up then identical twins — who share all of the same genes — would both be homosexual or heterosexual all of the time.

Secondly, the fact that adopted brothers were more likely to both be gay than non-twin siblings, supports the theory that environment and upbringing may have more to do with sexual orientation than genetics.

Dr. Dean Hamer and colleagues from the American National Institute of Health performed DNA analysis on gay brothers. They found a significant linkage between homosexual orientation and markers in a region of the X chromosome, known as Xq28, was detected in 82.5 per cent of examined homosexual brothers.

Discarding the slight probability that such co-inheritance happened by chance alone (approximately 1 per cent), the report concluded that "it appears that Xq28 contains a gene that contributes to homosexual orientation in males."

Dr. Hamer himself does not see his study as tantamount to the discovery of what "causes" homosexuality.

"Sexual orientation is too complex to be determined by a single gene. The main value of this work is that it opens a window into understanding how genes, the brain and the environment interact to mold human behaviour," Hamer explained.

Yet to be determined, is exactly how a gene may effect sexual orientation: directly, by shaping specific parts of the brain, or indirectly, affecting temperament that predisposes a boy towards homosexuality.

Equal rights or excuses?

Reactions to this trend of scientific research have been

mixed, both in and outside of the queer community.

Robert Bray, head of public information for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, was encouraged by these studies. "It points out that gay people are made this way by nature. It strikes at the heart of people who oppose gay rights and who think we don't deserve our rights because we're choosing to be the way we are."

Gregory J. King, spokesman for the Human Rights Campaign Fund in Washington, D.C., concurs. "Fundamentally, it [genetic research] increases our understanding of the origins of sexual orientation, and at the same time we believe it will help increase public support for lesbian and gay rights."

Others, like David D'Andrea, an active member of Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay and Transgender Students of McGill (LBGTSM), fault the research movement for being a defensive maneuver on the part of the queer community.

"Using the studies to prove that homosexuals are normal functioning humans, there is an almost apologetic tone to their findings," he said.

He said the general population should just learn to "live with it [the reality that homosexuals exist]."

D'Andrea dismissed those who believe that locating a gay gene would erase prejudice against homosexuals. "Using that argument, there would be no discrimination against blacks and other ethnic groups or people with diseases," he said.

"I find it worrisome that this seems to be feeding into a societal trend, with people using [the research] to justify their own prejudices," he added.

"If that's the way we're born..."

Many people worry that the genetic research will be interpreted as justification, or an excuse, for being homosexual.

Darrell Yates Rist, in a recent New York Times article, stated that he had once used the "born that way" defense as an olive branch for his parents, who "wanted to exonerate themselves for creating a home that might

be thought by some to have contributed to perversion."

There is still a lot of ambivalence about research trends which may provide a genetic "excuse" for homosexuality. Some gay rights leaders have denounced studies such as Dr. Hamer's as "yet another attempt to draw a reductionist and implacable line between homosexuality and heterosexuality."

John Fisher, executive director of Equality for Gays and Lesbians Everywhere (EGALE), went as far as to state that such research is "irrelevant to any purposes [his] organization has."

But scientists such as LeVay, who himself is gay, claim to have ventured into biological and genetic research in order to make society more accepting of homosexuality.

"If it's shown that that's the way we're born, it would undercut the idea that we're just misbehaving," LeVay said.

Fisher, however, questioned what effect such research would have on those who strongly resist acknowledging homosexuals as equal human beings. "I have limited confidence that it will change anyone's ideas if they are steadfastly opposed to homosexuality."

Still, some continue to believe that the research will help the gay and lesbian community, if only in their legal maneuverings within the justice system.

In a 1993 press release from the National Organization of Gay and Lesbian Scientists and Technical Professionals (NOGLSTP), they reiterated their hopes that in the debate over same-sex marriages, for example, discrimination based on a genetically immutable trait would be ruled a civil rights violation on a minority group.

In search of a "cure"?

Rist, who is also co-founder of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, remains uninterested in such studies. "Intellectually, what do we gain by finding out there's a gay gene? Nothing except an attempt to identify those people who have it and then open them up to all

sorts of experimentation to change them."

D'Andrea agreed. "The scary thing is not the research — it's how it's being used and interpreted," he said.

Indeed, anxieties regarding the ethical questions arising from the location of a gay gene have been the dominant concern during the course of the research.

The prospects of screening fetuses for genetic traits, and the possibility that marriage or childbearing might be restricted to "genetically desirable" people have alarmed the LGBT community.

Activists stress the importance of avoiding potential genetic engineering and the science of attempting to "fix" homosexuality, perhaps through gene therapy or similar methods.

One anti-gay activist with the Traditional Values Coalition was somewhat encouraged by the suggestion that homosexuality may be biologically based, believing that medicine and science should now seek to genetically alter lesbian, gay, and bisexual people.

So is homosexuality caused by a specific gene? Or does it stem from upbringing, environment and individual personality? Perhaps a combination of all of these points? The consensus seems to be that it's up to us all to decide for ourselves.

But perhaps it can best be summed up by John Fisher's response when asked what he thought causes homosexuality. "I can't explain it and I don't feel that I need to."



THE QUESTION OF EQUALITY?

Hollow Liberty and *Generation Q* at Image & Nation festival

By Meredith Cohen

"Homosexuality can happen to you. It can happen to anyone. What will you do if your parents find out? And they will find out because you will get caught. If someone else does not catch you, then you will be caught by your own mind."

Imagine that the year is 1966. You and your peers are assembled in a school auditorium and a man stands before you. He is not a preacher, but he is preaching and this is what you are hearing. If you were an American youth in 1966, it could have happened to you.

Imagine that you are queer in 1995 and some Reverend tells you that reparative therapy could help rectify your gender identity problem. After all, that's what homosexuality is—a gender identity problem—and therapy has helped thousands get on the "straight" and narrow path. It could happen to you. It may have. It happened to Lyn Duffin in 1991, who at 15 was institutionalised by her mother after she told her that she was

a lesbian. Lyn ran away.

But her story is told, along with many others. Amongst stories, clips of riots, interviews, anti-queer propaganda and court trials, *Hollow Liberty* and *Generation Q*, the first two productions in, *The Question of Equality*, a series of hour-long documentaries, weave an intricate tapestry of history. Together and separately, they present a collage of modern queer culture and history.

Through examination of the ship USS Norton Controversy and the notorious Hardwick case, *Hollow Liberty* implies that it is a series of events that were collectively part of an upward climb.

The chronology begins in 1980, the year that women were first allowed to serve in active duty in the navy. Norton was one of the first integrated ships. What ensued was a witch hunt of sorts. Of the 68 women crew members, 40 were removed for questioning and subjected to psychological testing. 24 women were eventually "honourably" discharged. No hard evidence was ever documented to prove their performance was inadequate. In many ways the

incident served as the harbinger to the current plea, still pending, for the rights of gays and lesbians to serve in the military.

The 1980 outrage was closely followed by another in 1982, when Georgian resident Michael Hardwick was arrested for sodomy after a policeman barged into his bedroom and, as they say, caught him in the act. What sounds more like a farce actually *did* occur. In a crowd-pleasing moment (granted the audience was a bit biased, and perhaps the reaction would have been different had we been members of the moral majority), then-Attorney General of Georgia Bowers says, in a thick Georgian accent, "I believe the 'sodomy rules' serve the morality of the people."

The accompanying vintage anti-homosexual propaganda from the '50s and '60s is even more amusing ("he was a healthy and athletic boy, he played football and he wanted to grow up to be a real man."). Also featured is a short army propaganda film overflowing with homo-erotic undercurrents. The irony is cleverly placed.

Hollow Liberty is not a joke, however, and poignant scenes of police brutality are interspersed with a clip of Bowers stating with all the glee that his accent can muster that gays are no less second class citizens than individuals who commit rape or incest. Juxtaposed is footage of President Clinton, shown in a campaign speech saying that he would be lifting the military ban, and then shown in his speech during the first months of his presidency saying that



with great aplomb, "I'm here with my girlfriend tonight to do this show, and I'm speaking with you, and I'm not fornicating as well."

From fornicating in the bedroom to not fornicating at a radio station, *Hollow Liberty* and *Generation Q* create a provocative

synthesis. While the first video leaves the viewer beguiled by the lunacy of rampant injustice, the second video offers a more optimistic picture of the strength of progressive youth.

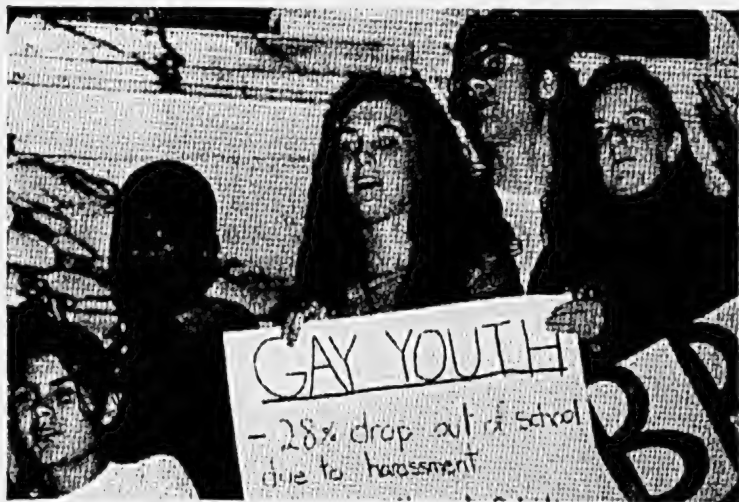
In *Hollow Liberty*, U.S. Congressman of Massachusetts Barney Frank states "The queer community is doubly plagued with legal discrimination and cultural pulverisation. This occurs to such an extent that 'coming out' is a political act; in fact anything we do that is culturally expressive is considered a political act."

If this is true, and I do believe it is, then the achievement of these films is two-fold as well. They recuperate some of what is lost and buried of our history and accomplishments, and bring us together to view them. In your face, Bowers.

the ban would remain in place.

Generation Q recounts a group of Massachusetts teenagers' efforts to pass a bill protecting queer students against discrimination in schools. This video centers around interviews with the teenagers and with another group of queer youth that attend the Eagle Center, a school in Los Angeles.

The school was founded by Jerry Batty to provide a safe place of education for lesbian and gay students who would have otherwise dropped out of school due to discrimination and harassment by their former peers. In a particularly funny scene, a lesbian couple at the school is hosting a radio show. A Reverend Sheldon calls and comments that all queer culture centers around sex. One of the women answers,



Generation Q



Michael Hardwick, from *Hollow Liberty*

INTERNATIONAL Queer cuts

Zimbabwe goes another step too far

Zimbabwe MP Aeneas Chigwedere said that "[Gay people are] like tuberculosis patients, they should be hibernated [sic] in an isolation hospital until they are treated."

This statement was made in support of a motion made by President Robert Mugabe's anti-gay campaign.

Mugabe has been attacking queer people since August 1, when the Gay and Lesbians of Zimbabwe were banned from a state funded book fair.

Tokyo has its second pride parade

2 200 marched in the second gay-pride parade in Tokyo, Japan. The march wound through the streets of the Shibuya neighborhood. Parade coordinator Kayoko Shirakawa said it was important for the parade to "be political, not just about having fun."

The day after the parade,

the prime minister's office released the results of a poll saying that an overwhelming majority of Japanese citizens disapproved of anti-gay discrimination and discrimination against HIV-positive people.

In the streets of Verona...

5 000 queers marched through the streets of Verona

in protest of the Catholic dominated City Council's resolution that calls homosexuality a "depraved behavior". The march was organised by the Arcigay-Arcilesbica and the Verona Gay and Lesbian Movement. The City Council's resolution was made in response to the European Parliament's resolution urging all European Union member nations to grant queers equality.

Father, brother, teacher, friend

LB
GT

anonymous

Before this past July, I believed myself to be an open-minded straight girl with a "normal" straight life. I was — and still am — a social person with lots of good friends, two of whom I can relate to on all levels and call my best friends. I love being involved in society, and this past summer — quite randomly, in fact — I decided to fight any and all homophobia I came into contact with.

Although I lived in what I knew was a relatively sheltered, straight world, I had some gay acquaintances and realised that homophobic behaviour was still accepted and even encouraged by too many people. I decided to expose myself to gay literature and film and promised to "get to know as many gay people as possible so I could better understand their culture."

Before I make it sound like I am condemning myself for my own naiveté, allow me to assure you that I have no problem with what my attitude was this summer. On the contrary, I believe that it was my interest in sexuality, gay culture and gay rights that encouraged one of my closest friends, Bill, to come out to me one day in July.

Nothing could have made me feel more honoured and touched than his trust in me and I was genuinely happy that he came out. The experience which has so greatly influenced me and shaped my attitudes however, is not this one, but an incident that occurred the

following day.

One of the two best friends I mentioned earlier is a guy I'll call Dan, who I had been in love with for well over a year. I do not use the term best friend lightly, and I honestly felt, and still feel, that Dan is my perfect match.

We have been best friends for more than three years and have a relationship made up of intense conversations and concern for each other. Although I could not understand why we were not going out, I knew without a doubt that there was no one who was nearly as close to him as I was.

Having said all that, there was one thing I did not know about Dan until July, less than four months ago today. On a beautiful summer night in Toronto's College Park, in a conversation charged with emotions and filled with tears, Dan told me he was gay. I suddenly found myself caught in a situation in which I would never have wished to find myself, but which has shaped my attitudes more than any other experience in my life.

Nothing hurts more than not being able to have the person you love, and the pain and shock I went through was one of the most difficult experiences of my life. What is more important now, however, is that nothing has changed between Dan and I since he came out.

I finally understand everything about him and no longer need to wonder why we are so perfectly matched and yet not going out to-

gether. There is nothing different about him or about us now, which brings me back to reflect upon my original mission — to "get to know more gay people so I could better understand their culture." It makes me laugh when I think of my statement now, but I guess sometimes one is too close to a situation to see it clearly.

I do not think I realised how true it is to say that gay people are your co-workers, your doctors, your friends, your children. Although I knew of my gay classmate, my gay professor and my gay colleague, I perceived my own little sheltered world as straight. I would never have thought the person I consider to be most similar to me, who I love the most in the world, to be gay.

By knowing a gay individual, I do not necessarily understand gay culture. Furthermore, if I knew twenty gay people, I would not likely be able to classify them as a uniform group of people. This is the naiveté that I possessed before and that I laugh at now.

I wanted to know what gay people were like and to discover how interesting I thought they must be. In reality, I would find as much diversity, if not more, in this culture as in any other.

Homophobia is a fear of homosexuals, a fear of someone who is too different to accept. When you open your eyes, the reality is that there is no fundamental difference at all.

COMING OUT... ...AND BEING ACCEPTED

by Jen Mooney

Most of the coming-out stories I have heard are about a queer rejected by her/his family and friends. The individual is left alone to deal with the anxiety, depression and pain of not being the status-quo "heterosexual."

While this is the sad truth for many people, I was fortunate that this is not my story. For me, coming out was one of the most self-affirming, beautiful and liberating experiences of my life.

Like many queers, I assumed I was straight for the majority of my life, though growing up within a liberal family and among liberal peers, I had never had a problem with homosexuality.

Bisexuality, however, was another story. I remember being 14 and arguing with my father about whether or not bisexuality was "real." He, like many straight and gay people, felt that you had to be one or the other.

I argued fiercely against this, without ever questioning why I felt so passionately about bisexuality.

From theory to reality

In Montréal — which was relatively accepting, compared to the repressed, conservative town in which I spent most of my life — I began to explore what it would be like to kiss another woman.

I eventually got up the courage to do so, and I started accepting that I could find other women sexually attractive.

Harbouring an unrequited crush on a woman in one of my classes, I looked deep within to find out why my feelings for this woman were "different" from those I had

for other women. I realised — with surprise — that I wanted to get to know her, to ask her out on a real "date," and to see if a relationship could develop.

This thought terrified me. It signaled an awakening I knew could not be silenced or ignored. What would my boyfriend think? My family and friends? What about the marriage and kids that I'd always wanted?

So much for having "no problem" with queer sexuality! What the fuck was I going to do?

An ear to listen

The logical answer was to seek out people who had the same feelings that I did, so I went to the LBGM (now LBGT) office for the Peer Counseling I had seen advertised.

There I was, welcomed by a non-judgmental counselor who advised me that LBGM was a place where I wouldn't be asked to label my sexuality unless I wanted to. I started going to the bi and women's discussion groups and finally found other people who felt the same angst and attractions that I did.

I was relieved and overjoyed at the variety of people in the queer community. My naïve preconception of what it meant to be "queer" was shattered very quickly, and I realised that being queer was whatever I wanted it to be.

I started coming out to my friends, boyfriend and siblings, all of whom were amazingly accepting. I — like many queers — was so afraid that people would desert me when they knew THE TRUTH. Luckily it didn't happen. Letting people I loved see this part of me helped to further my own self-acceptance.

Subtle hint...

The only people left were my parents — ack! I've always had a very intimate and open relationship with my parents about everything except sex. I knew telling them was something I had to do as the final stage of my coming out.

I kept putting it off until one day my mother found my copy of *The Penguin Book of Lesbian Short Stories*. That weekend, I asked my parents if I could talk to them about "something important." They, my sister Maureen and I, gathered on their big bed — the location of all of our important family talks.

After beating around the bush for a while, I finally said the words "I'm bisexual."

I was shocked at my physical reaction. Bursting into tears, I cried out, "I can't believe I've finally told you." I immediately felt myself being embraced by my mother and my sister, and my father held my hand. I silently thanked "God" (despite my agnosticism) and knew then that "everything would be alright."

My identity

This is hardly the end of my story. My straight boyfriend and I have had an extremely difficult time trying to deal with my bisexuality.

I question myself all the time and still buy into the idea that I have to be either gay or straight. I often wish I could "go back" to being straight or else devote myself to being a "true" dyke.

Now I'm carving out my own definition of what bisexual means for me. Although my life is definitely more complicated, it is much richer than before I came out. I am living my life the only way I can — my way.

LB GT Little Sisters still defiant

Almost one year and over a quarter of a million dollars in expenses later, Little Sisters Bookstore in Vancouver is still waiting to hear the verdict in its case against Canada Customs.

The precedent-setting court case in which Little Sisters challenged the right of Customs to seize so-called 'obscene' literature was heard in the BC Supreme Court from October to December 1994.

Little Sisters, which carries literature for Vancouver's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities, has had its shipments seized repeatedly since 1985.

The confiscated articles sometimes included publications allowed into mainstream bookstores.

Little Sisters decided to take action last year. Fed up with having to challenge each seizure on a case by case basis, the store is questioning the legality of Customs' powers of detainment.

The store argued that Customs' use of the term "obscenity" is unclear and criticised Customs for targeting gay and lesbian authors and bookstores while being more tolerant of heterosexual literature.

According to Kim Mistysyn, from the Glad Day bookstore in Toronto, one of the big problems is that Customs officials receive little training in pornography and free speech issues. The only guidance they are given is a two

hour seminar on literature. During the trial last year, many witnesses from Customs admitted to this scanty training and still others said they found homosexuality "repulsive."

"Customs obviously does not have the experience or education to deal with books. They have repeatedly demonstrated their inability to keep things consistent," declared Mistysyn.

The mistakes are revealing. Mistysyn pointed to a recent mishap surrounding the veg-

dian bookstore.

Customs officials also routinely target independent bookstores while large chains such as Cole's are left alone. Mistysyn attributes this to the fact that border guards do not have time to look through the entire order of large shipments going to major chains.

Independent bookstores cannot afford to import books in bulk and suspicious officials are care-

ful to search the shipments headed for stores such as Glad Day or Little Sisters. Just last year, Glad Day's shipment of the famous American author Samuel Delany's book *Madman* was seized, while the Cole's down the street received its copies without any



etarian cookbook *The Politics of Meat*. Border guards glanced at the cover, assumed the book depicted gay sex, and seized it.

"They would have realised if they had read a little of the book like they are supposed to," noted Mistysyn.

And then there is the double standard. Books depicting gay sex are routinely detained, whereas literature involving heterosexual sex is allowed through without any difficulty. According to Fuller, *The Joy of Gay Sex* was seized, while the heterosexual equivalent, *The Joy of Sex*, can be found on the shelves of virtually any Cana-

difficulty.

Fuller commented that other marginalised groups have also been systematically targeted recently. Pointing to problems with prominent US feminist bell hooks' last work, Fuller said she believes Customs is beginning to "widen its scope" of censorship beyond gay and lesbian books to include the literature of feminists and people of colour.

But this phenomenon is not limited to Customs Canada. The attack against gay, lesbian, feminist literature has taken a new voice since 1992, when a Supreme Court of Canada ruling classified 'de-

BOOKSTORES FACE ARBITRARY HARASSMENT AT BORDER

By Andrea Mason

grading' and 'dehumanising' sexual expression as criminal obscenity. That decision has been used continually by officials and judges to declare that homo-erotic expression is degrading as well.

In a recent interview with the *Advocate*, Bruce Walsh of the anti-censorship coalition Censorstop commented that, "Every gay bookseller in this country has attempted to sell their bookstores, but nobody wants to buy them."

There is a lot of support for the Little Sister's initiative, as Customs has a history of conflict with gay and lesbian bookstores in Canada. According to Mistysyn, the fact that there are only three specifically gay and lesbian bookstores in Canada makes it easy for officials to keep track of the shipments imported by these stores.

Glad Day has had its share of hassles with the border guards. After numerous instances of prolonged shipment detention without notification, the store was forced to start importing through a broker. Although this is an extra ex-

pense, it ensures that officials will be forced to at least give notice when they seize a shipment at the Canada/US border.

While Janine Fuller of Little Sisters said "There is less imposition of state will on the private domain" in Québec, the Montréal bookstore L'Androgyne has also been on Custom's hit list in the past.

Fuller admitted that bookstores carrying gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered literature are starting to buckle under the pressure. "We end up censoring ourselves," said Fuller.

The result is that some publications, such as the lesbian erotic magazine *Bad Attitude*, have "effectively been banned in Canada," said Fuller.

But Little Sisters continues to be defiant, because, as Fuller stated, "A gay and lesbian bookstore is one of the few places where gays can see their ideas and history represented."

INTERNATIONAL Queer cuts

Potential victory in New South Wales

The state of New South Wales, Australia, might be the next region to approve same-sex unions.

Jeff Shaw, New South Wales attorney-general, will present

the state cabinet with a series of reforms that will recognise same-sex couples and transsexuals.

Says Shaw, "Society has changed, and the community is ready to accept that relationships ought to be dealt

with equitably, whether they are based on marriage or otherwise."

In support of transsexuals, Shaw hopes to extend the protection of the state's Anti-Discrimination Act, as well as introduce a proposal to allow transsexuals to change their gender on their birth certificates.

Argentina's role in Women's Conference criticised in Buenos Aires

Members of Lebianas a la Vista marched in protest of the Argentinean government's support of anti-lesbian positions at the United Nations

Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. Demonstrators were extremely displeased by the exclusion of lesbian rights at the conference and marched with banners reading "Lesbian Rights are Human Rights."

You can contact Lebianas a la Vista at Piedras 1170 1ero.B, (1070) Buenos Aires, Argentina and ales@wawani.apc.org.

Denmark's Same Sex marriage policy.

In a display of protest, two leaders of Denmark's national queer organisation were married. The queer couple consists of a lesbian and gay man.

The marriage was intended to protest provisions in Danish law that withhold certain rights granted to opposite sex couples, such as adoption and access to artificial insemination.

Denmark was the first country in the world to allow same-sex unions in 1989, a decision soon followed by many other European nations.

In a related story, Eigil Axlil, part of the first couple to be legally married in the world, died at the age of 71. He had been happily married for six years with his lover Axel Axlil. The couple had been together for 46 years.

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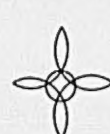
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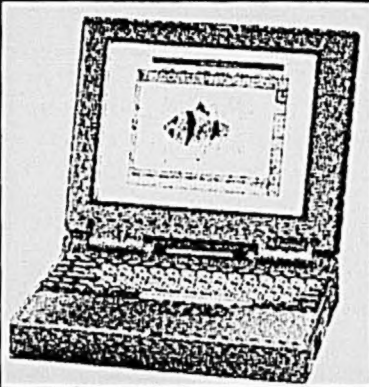
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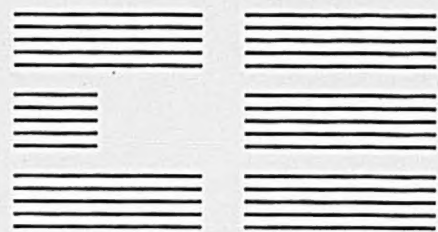
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